

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

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SUBJ: UNICEF ASSISTANCE TO KHMER REPUBLIC

FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE DATED 18 MARCH 1975 ISSUED BY
UN REGARDING UNICEF PROVISION OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
TO THE KHMER REPUBLIC.

QTE:

IN SPITE OF THE DIFFICULTIES CREATED BY THE DRAMATIC
SITUATION IN PHNOM PENH AND OTHER TOWNS IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC,
THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), TOGETHER
WITH OTHER CONCERNED ORGANIZATIONS, IS MAKING INCREASED
EFFORTS TO HELP MEET SOME OF THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN THERE.
THE UNICEF OFFICE IN PHNOM PENH, HEADED BY PAUL IGNATIEFF,
A CANADIAN CITIZEN, HAS REMAINED OPEN SO FAR AND IT IS
HOPED THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY
FOR THE BENEFIT OF CAMBODIAN CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF FUTURE
MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS.

UNICEF ESTIMATES AT THE PRESENT TIME THAT A MINIMUM
OF 90 TONS PER MONTH OF SPECIAL CHILDREN'S FOOD, IN
ADDITION TO RICE AND OTHER FOODS, IS REQUIRED TO CARE
FOR THE MALNOURISHED CHILDREN IN PHNOM PENH ALONE AND
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THAT THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY WELL INCREASE IN THE MONTHS

AHEAD. THROUGH THE EXISTING DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES, THIS QUANTITY OF SPECIAL FOOD WOULD REACH SOME 94,000 CHILDREN.

UNTIL OTHER ROUTES ARE OPEN, SUCH SUPPLIES WILL HAVE TO BE FLOWN INTO PHNOM PENH, WHETHER FROM THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OR FROM NEARBY PORTS SUCH AS SINGAPORE, BANGKOK, OR SAIGON. THE FOODS THAT UNICEF HAD HAD IN STOCK IN SEVERAL PORTS OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA ARE NOW BEING USED UP. TO MAINTAIN THE PIPELINE, IN THE FIRST PLACE SO AS TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS IN THE COUNTRY, AND ALSO TO BUILD UP AREAS RESERVES NEEDED FOR THE KHMER REPUBLIC FOR THE PERIOD TO COME, UNICEF HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO OBTAIN SPECIAL FOODS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA AND FROM COUNTRIES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. AS PART OF THIS OPERATION, 30 TONS OF HIGH PROTEIN DIET SUPPLEMENT AND MEDICAMENTS, SOME OF WHICH WERE FLOWN FROM EUROPE, WERE ASSEMBLED IN BANGKOK AND SAIGON OVER THE PAST WEEK-END TO BE AIRLIFTED TO PHNOM PENH.

A FIRST AIR SHIPMENT OF 118 TONS OF SKIM MILK POWDER IS CURRENTLY BEING ARRANGED FROM SINGAPORE TO PHNOM PENH, DRAWING UPON STOCKS ORIGINATING FROM NEW ZEALAND. FURTHER QUANTITIES OF THIS COMMODITY ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SHORTLY.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS EFFORT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC) HAS PLEDGED TO DONATE 320 TONS MILK POWDER TO UNICEF, AND THE UNITED STATES 36 TONS, IN ADDITION TO 90 TONS OF HIGH PROTEIN FOOD. CANADA HAS SENT 15.5 TONS OF MILK POWDER AND 10.5 TONS OF HIGH PROTEIN DIET SUPPLEMENT, NOW BEING PREPARED FOR AIRSHIPMENT FROM SINGAPORE TO PHNOM PENH. ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED, BOTH IN CASH AND IN KIND.

THE ASSISTANCE BEING BROUGHT IN BY UNICEF FORMS PART OF A LARGER CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MOUNTING NUMBER OF CASES OF SEVERELY MALNOURISHED CHILDREN, INVOLVING ALSO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING CARE AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES. WITHIN PHNOM PENH, UNICEF, TOGETHER WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), IS HELPING TO SET UP NEW CENTRES OF THE MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES, TO TREAT MALNUTRITION AND TO DISTRIBUTE THE FOOD. MOST OF THESE CENTRES, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHERS SERVING CHILDREN WITHIN THE CITY, RECEIVE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT BY STAFF OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO ACCELERATE THE OPENING OF STILL OTHER CENTRES.

THIS EFFORT IS DESIGNED TO RELIEVE PRESSURE ON THE CLINICS ALREADY EXISTING IN PHNOM PENH FOR DEALING WITH MALNOURISHED CHILDREN, WHICH HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED DURING THE PAST MONTHS. EVEN OPERATING AT A PEAK CAPACITY, THEY CAN NOW TAKE ONLY THE MOST DESPERATE CASES REFERRED TO THEM. ONE SUCH CLINIC IN PHNOM PENH HAS RECENTLY HAD TO TURN AWAY 84 PER CENT OF CASES REFERRED TO IT.

UNICEF IS ALSO SUPPLYING MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, DRUGS AND DIET SUPPLEMENTS AND HELPING WITH CONSTRUCTION COSTS TO EXPAND THE CHILDREN'S WARDS OF A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL IN PHNOM PENH. THE WARDS' CAPACITY WILL BE QUINTUPLED TO ENABLE IT TO TREAT 500 CHILDREN AT ANY ONE TIME, THE MAJORITY OF THEM SEVERELY MALNOURISHED AND IN NEED OF SPECIAL MEDICAL CARE SUCH AS REHYDRATION.

WITHIN ITS LIMITED RESOURCES, UNICEF IS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO HELP ALLEVIATE HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR CHILDREN ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BATTLE LINES. IN OCTOBER 1974, UNICEF BEGAN SHIPPING BASIC EQUIPMENT FOR 10 MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRES IN PROVINCES UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE "GOUVERNEMENT ROYAL D'UNION NATIONALE DU KAMPUCHEA -- FRONT D'UNION NATIONALE DU KAMPUCHEA (GRUNK-FUNK)". DELIVERY OF THIS ASSISTANCE HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED. WAYS TO HELP MEET OTHER PRESSING NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN THESE AREAS ARE BEING EXPLORED.

UNICEF'S ASSISTANCE TO THE KHMER REPUBLIC FORMS PART OF A LARGER RELIEF AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME TO ASSIST CHILDREN AND MOTHERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE INDO-CHINA PENINSULA. UNQTE.

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